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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/18/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [AF](#) [FR](#)
SUBJECT: FRENCH RESPONSE TO U.S. PRIORITIES ON AFGHANISTAN

REF: STATE 118297

Classified By: Political Counselor Andrew Young for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Post delivered reftel demarche outlining U.S. priorities for Afghanistan on November 17 to Francois Delmas, a specialist assigned to the French MFA's Af-Pak cell. Delmas responded that most of the priorities outlined in the demarche were similar to French objectives, particularly the focus on combatting corruption and improving local governance. Delmas noted that, in the same spirit, FM Kouchner had recently delivered to President Karzai a "9-point plan" for improving governance. In addition, during a meeting between SRAP Richard Holbrooke with his French counterpart Thierry Mariani during a Paris visit on November 13, Mariani stated that France was closely following Karzai's next steps, including his inauguration speech and appointments to his cabinet. He added that the August election had left a negative opinion in France that President Karzai is not the duly elected popular representative of his country and that Allies are finding themselves in a situation with no exit. That said, reconciliation remains an important issue for France, as the Afghan government encourages efforts to welcome back former Taliban fighters. Mariani was skeptical about the ability of Allies to provide additional troops, saying that European troops are "depleted" and he hoped that ISAF could find the necessary flexibility to move some troops from "green" regions to zones where there is a greater need for combat forces, as this would have an impact equivalent to an additional 4000 to 5000 soldiers. Post will follow-up to obtain additional details, including a copy of Kouchner's "9-point plan."

PEKALA